

CHAPTER 1—PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLANNING EFFORT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Resource Management Plan (RMP) and final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) document the comprehensive analysis of alternatives for the planning and management of public lands and resources administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rawlins Field Office (RFO) in Wyoming. The BLM RFO administrative area is located in south-central and southeastern Wyoming (Map 1-1). The RFO includes approximately 11.2 million acres of land in Albany, Carbon, Laramie, and Sweetwater Counties. Within that area, the RFO administers approximately 3.4 million acres of public land surface and mineral estate, 0.1 million acres of public land surface where the mineral estate is state and private, and 1.2 million acres of federal mineral estate where the surface is privately owned or state-owned (Maps 1-2 and 1-3, and Table 1-1). Map 1-4 shows the location and names of communities and other major geographic features within the RFO.

The public lands and federal mineral estate within the Rawlins RMP Planning Area (RMPPA) are the subject of the planning effort and the associated EIS document. Neither this document nor the current land use plan applies to lands or minerals within the RMPPA that are administered by federal agencies other than BLM, such as the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and the U.S. Air Force.

This RMP FEIS provides analysis of potential management direction for important resource values and resource uses within the RMPPA. It also allocates the use of public lands for multiple uses. The RMP FEIS also provides management direction for the protection of certain resources, while allowing for leasing and development of mineral resources, livestock grazing, and other activities at appropriate levels.

1.1.1 Changes Between the Draft EIS and the Final EIS

Chapter 1 has been reformatted to meet current BLM direction (BLM-H-1601-1, 2005). The changes in document format are most easily noted by comparing the draft EIS (DEIS) Table of Contents with the FEIS Table of Contents. Much of the detailed information included in the DEIS Chapter 1 has been summarized. Some of the original text has been reformatted, either by creating a new section or moving the information to a more appropriate location in the FEIS. The location of more detailed information is usually referenced at the end of the section.

Chapter 1 includes two new sections: 1.6 Relationship Between BLM and Cooperating Agencies, and 1.7 Scoping and Public Involvement.

1.1.2 Reader's Guide

This document has been prepared consistent with federal regulations for both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). NEPA regulations are found at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500–1508, and FLPMA regulations pertaining to land use planning are found at 43 CFR 1610. This section outlines how the EIS and its information are laid out, and how the NEPA process and documents are integrated into BLM's planning process.

See Table 1-1 below for information on land/minerals ownership and administrative jurisdiction.

**Table 1-1. Land and Minerals Ownership and Administrative Jurisdiction
Within the Rawlins RMPPA**

Jurisdiction	Acres¹
Areas the Rawlins RMP decision will cover:	
A. Federal land/federal minerals ²	3,425,270
B. Federal land/nonfederal minerals ³	126,220
C. Nonfederal land/federal minerals ⁴	1,247,130
Total BLM-administered federal land surface to be covered by RMP decisions	3,551,480
Total BLM-administered federal mineral estate to be covered by RMP decisions	4,672,160
Areas the Rawlins RMP decisions WILL NOT cover:	
D. USFS land/federal minerals ⁵	971,990
E. BOR land/federal minerals ⁵	32,830
F. United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) land/federal minerals ⁵	6,410
Total BLM-administered federal mineral estate that WILL NOT be covered by RMP decisions	1,011,230
Other lands that WILL NOT be covered by RMP decisions:	
G. Department of Defense land	6,030
H. Private land/private minerals and state lands/state minerals ⁶	5,309,520
Total land surface area in the Rawlins RMPPA (all ownerships)¹	11,211,490

¹ Because of land surface and mineral ownership overlaps and administrative responsibility overlaps, acreage figures for different jurisdictions do not add up to the total acreage. For the purpose of the Rawlins RMP, where one or more of the mineral resource categories are federally owned, the acres are listed as if all minerals in the area were federally owned. Where mixed minerals ownership occurs (for example, privately owned oil and gas, overlapping with federally owned coal in the same area), minerals planning and management decisions in the RMP will pertain only to the federally owned minerals.

² In areas where the federal land surface and federal mineral estate are both administered by the BLM, the RMP will include planning and management decisions for both the land surface and the mineral estate.

³ In areas where the federal land surface is administered by the BLM, and the minerals are privately owned or owned by the State of Wyoming or local governments, the RMP will include planning and management decisions for only the BLM-administered federal land surface. Although these surface management decisions may have some effect on the ability to manage and develop the non-federally owned minerals, the RMP planning and management decisions will not pertain to the nonfederal mineral estate. At the same time, surface and minerals management actions and development activities anticipated in these areas will be taken into account for the purpose of cumulative impact analysis in the Rawlins RMP EIS.

⁴ In areas where the land surface is privately owned or owned by the State of Wyoming or local governments, and the minerals are federally owned, the RMP will include planning and management decisions for only the BLM-administered federal mineral estate. While the land and resource uses and values on the nonfederal surface will be taken into account and will affect development of the federal mineral planning and management decisions, these decisions will not pertain to the state and privately owned land surface. At the same time, surface and minerals management actions and development activities anticipated in these areas will be taken into account for the purpose of cumulative impact analysis in the Rawlins RMP EIS.

⁵ In areas where the federal land surface is administered by the USFS, BOR, or USFWS, and the federal mineral estate is administered by BLM, the land surface planning and management decisions are the responsibility of these "other" federal or state surface management agencies. Any BLM administrative responsibilities within these areas (e.g., actions concerning the federal mineral estate) are handled case by case and are guided by the other surface management agencies' policies, procedures, and plans. At the same time, surface and minerals management actions and development activities anticipated in these areas will be taken into account for the purpose of cumulative impact analysis in the Rawlins RMP EIS.

It is also important to note that, while other BLM responsibilities include surface management of certain federal lands withdrawn for purposes of the BOR, they are carried out in accordance with an interagency agreement between the two agencies. Administrative jurisdiction (including land use planning) for these lands lies with the BOR.

⁶ The Rawlins RMP will not include any planning and management decisions for areas where the land surface and minerals are both privately owned or owned by the State of Wyoming or local governments.

Reader's Guide to This Document

This document's format is consistent with the format for an EIS as recommended in the NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1502.10).

Chapter 1, Purpose and Need—Presents an introduction to the FEIS; the purpose and need to which BLM is responding; an overview of the BLM planning process; statutes (laws), regulations, and guidelines BLM must adhere to in preparing an RMP; describes the relationship of this FEIS to other plans; describes the relationship between BLM and our Cooperating Agencies; and summarizes the overall scoping process and public involvement.

Chapter 2, Description of the Alternatives—Describes how the alternatives were developed, management guidance common to all alternatives, and alternatives considered but eliminated from further consideration. It also presents specific management actions proposed under the alternatives, and a comparative summary of the impacts of the alternatives that have been analyzed in detail.

Chapter 3, Affected Environment—Describes the RMPPA and the existing environmental conditions that would be affected by the alternatives.

Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences—Describes the impacts of the alternatives. This section forms the scientific and analytic basis for the summary comparison of impacts presented in Chapter 2. This section also describes cumulative impacts, any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources, and the relationship between local, short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity.

Chapter 5, Consultation and Coordination—Describes the overall EIS scoping process and other past and planned agency consultation and public involvement activities. A list of agencies, organizations, and individuals who were sent the FEIS is also presented.

Chapter 6, List of Preparers—Presents the names and qualifications of the persons responsible for preparing this FEIS.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms—Provides an alphabetized list of abbreviations and acronyms used in this FEIS.

Glossary—Provides an alphabetized list of definitions of terms used in this FEIS.

References—Provides full citation information for all references cited in the document. Most cited documents are readily available from other public sources such as libraries or the Internet, and many of the cited documents are available for public review at the BLM RFO.

Appendices—Include additional supporting documents that substantiate analysis or provide other information directly relevant to the EIS.

Reader's Guide to the RMP Process

The 43 CFR 1610 regulations establish procedural requirements for BLM's land use planning process. These regulations include the requirement that land use plans (RMPs) are developed, proposed, and approved using NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508) for preparing an EIS. The following NEPA processes and environmental documents were used to prepare the proposed RMP:

Notice of Intent (NOI)—BLM published an NOI in the *Federal Register* on February 25, 2002. This was to announce its intent to revise the Great Divide RMP (GDRMP) and prepare an EIS. The NOI explained that the GDRMP would be renamed the Rawlins RMP to be consistent with current organizational structure and the BLM naming scheme for land use plans.

Scoping—A 60-day scoping period began on February 3, 2003. It made scoping information, including a scoping notice and the Management Situation Analysis (MSA) as required by BLM planning regulations, available to the public.

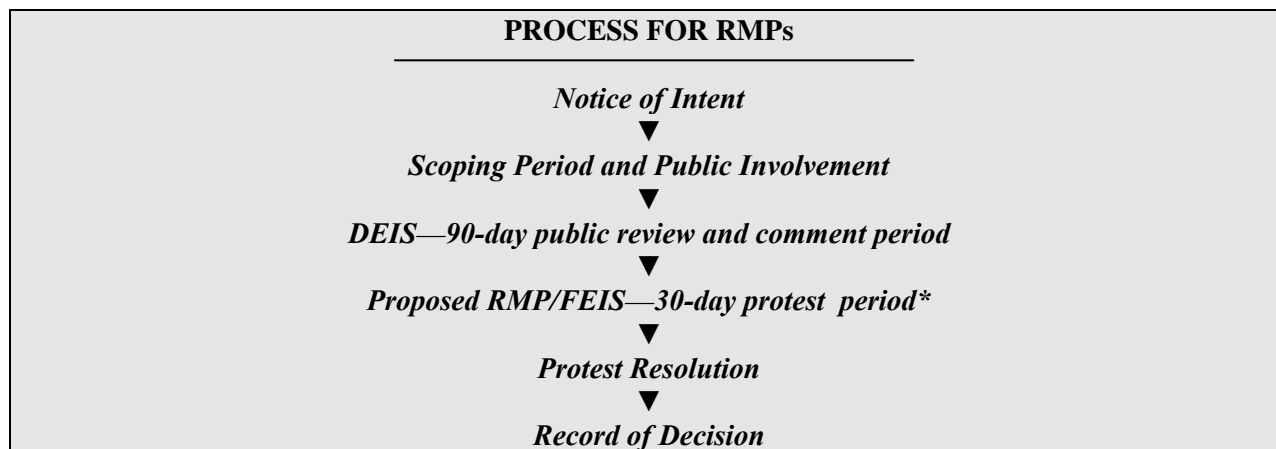
DEIS—A DEIS was prepared and released to the public by Notice of Availability (NOA), published in the *Federal Register* on December 17, 2004. Publication of the NOA began a 90-day public review and comment period. The DEIS described four possible plan alternatives for the RMP, and included an analysis and potential environmental consequences of implementing each of the possible plan alternatives. BLM indicated its preferred plan would be Alternative 4.

Proposed RMP and FEIS (RMP/FEIS)—This document describes BLM’s proposed RMP for the RFO, additional information and analysis, and public comments made to the DEIS plan alternatives, as well as BLM’s response to those comments.

Protest Period and Resolution—A 30-day protest period will commence with BLM’s publication of an NOA in the *Federal Register* of this Proposed RMP/FEIS. During the 30-day period, protests of the State Director’s proposed RMP may be submitted to the BLM Director.

Record of Decision (ROD)—Following resolution of protests to the RMP, the State Director may approve the RMP. This approval is documented as an ROD as described under NEPA regulations (Table 1-2).

Table 1-2. The NEPA Process for RMP Approval



*This document is the proposed RMP/FEIS for the Rawlins RMP; the 30-day protest period started on the date its NOA was published in the *Federal Register*.

1.1.3 Agency Roles and Relationships

NEPA regulations provide for a lead agency’s inclusion of federal, state, and local governments in the development of the EIS and in BLM’s planning process. This section identifies roles and responsibilities of both the BLM lead agency and cooperating government agencies.

BLM

The BLM is the lead agency for the EIS process. The lead agency takes primary responsibility for preparing the EIS as well as requesting the participation of each cooperating agency. According to federal regulations, the lead agency is to request the participation of each cooperating agency in the EIS process at the earliest possible time. Furthermore, the lead agency must use the environmental analysis and proposals of cooperating agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise, to the maximum extent possible consistent with its responsibility as lead agency.

Cooperating Agencies

Upon request of the lead agency, any other federal agency that has jurisdiction by law will be a cooperating agency (also called a cooperator). In addition, any other federal agency that has special expertise with respect to any environmental issue that should be addressed in the EIS may be a cooperating agency upon request of the lead agency. An agency may also request the lead agency to designate it a cooperating agency.

The concept of cooperators has been extended in recent years from federal agencies to include state and local government agencies. This inclusion of state and local government agencies as cooperating agencies is consistent with BLM's planning approach and policies. Any designated federal, state, or local government agency that becomes a cooperator is required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on its specific roles and responsibilities.

The primary role of the cooperating agencies is to provide input during the EIS process on issues for which they have special expertise or jurisdiction. Cooperating agencies may participate in the process in a role similar to that of any BLM interdisciplinary team member (e.g., BLM rangeland management specialists, wildlife biologists). They also serve as reviewers of draft information and give overall advice on the EIS process. Cooperators meet with the lead agency periodically throughout the EIS process to discuss EIS issues as a group.

Cooperating agencies are expected to participate in the EIS process at the earliest possible time, including participation in the scoping process. Staffs from cooperating agencies are available to enhance the interdisciplinary capability of the lead agency by providing needed information throughout the NEPA process.

The following agencies with jurisdiction, special expertise, or interest in the Rawlins RMP development process have agreed to participate in the EIS process as cooperating agencies:

- Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District
- Medicine Bow Conservation District
- Little Snake River Conservation District
- Sweetwater County Conservation District
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- State of Wyoming and its agencies
- Carbon County
- Sweetwater County
- Albany County.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.2.1 Background

An RMP guides management actions for public lands and resources identified and addressed by the plan. Land use plan decisions establish goals and objectives for resource management, the measures needed to achieve goals and objectives, and parameters for using BLM lands or resources. Land use plan decisions identify lands that are open to, or available for, certain uses, including any applicable restrictions, and lands that are closed to certain uses. Land use plan decisions ordinarily are made on a broad scale and customarily guide subsequent site-specific implementation decisions. When there are competing resource uses and values in the same area, the FLPMA requires that BLM manage the public lands and their various resources so that they are used in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people. Land use plan decisions are made according to the procedures of BLM's planning regulations in 43 CFR 1600.

BLM prepares an EIS in conjunction with an RMP to plan actions and make decisions affecting public lands in the RMPPA. (See Reader's Guide.)

The Rawlins RMP will consider the same public lands and resources as addressed by the GDRMP, approved by the Wyoming BLM State Director by ROD on November 8, 1990. Until the Rawlins RMP is completed, the GDRMP provides current guidance and direction for management of BLM-administered public land surface and federal mineral estate.

1.2.2 Purpose

Section 102 of FLPMA sets forth the policy for periodically projecting the present and future use of public lands and their resources through the use of a planning process. FLPMA Sections 201 and 202 are the statutory authorities for the land use plans prepared by BLM. The purpose or goal of the land use plan is to ensure BLM-administered lands and resources are managed in accordance with the FLPMA and the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

The purpose of revising the GDRMP (USDI 1990a) is to address the growing needs of the RMPPA. The Rawlins RMP would update information and revise management goals and objectives to reflect changed conditions and needs. The Rawlins RMP also would revise and replace the GDRMP and its associated NEPA documents.

1.2.3 Need

In 2001, the BLM evaluated the GDRMP and concluded that much of the information used to prepare that plan had changed. Further, associated estimates of environmental consequences were either underestimated or overestimated for some resources.

The GDRMP does not provide BLM with current information, or lacks enough information or analysis, on which the decisionmakers could depend when evaluating a site-specific proposed use. For example, the GDRMP did not forecast the pace or intensity of oil and gas development that has occurred to meet market demands or domestic energy needs. The reasonably foreseeable development and actions used to evaluate the effects of implementing the GDRMP did not anticipate the actual level of oil and gas development that has occurred. The conditions and known potential consequences used then are either approaching or have reached the assumptions and numbers used in estimating or predicting environmental consequences.

Therefore, to have a relevant and contemporary plan, the BLM needs to update the goals, objectives, and information in the plan, and make new estimates of environmental consequences of implementing activities to meet the goals and objectives. This plan is expected to have an effective life of about 20 years. It is assumed that it will be amended or maintained as appropriate, and as needed, to stay relevant and useful.

Based on the 2001 evaluation, the BLM identified the following topics or resource information, and use allocations and direction as those needing reconsideration or revision or both:

- Although air quality decisions are adequate (i.e., comply with state law and standards and guidelines), there is a need for a region-wide analysis.
- Environmental justice (Executive Order 12898) has not been addressed.
- Existing Classification and Multiple Use Act classifications and withdrawals continue to provide protection to various resource values.
- Management direction for utility and transportation systems and communication sites may be inadequate.
- Management direction for land tenure adjustment may be inadequate.
- Standards for Healthy Rangelands (USDI, BLM 1997) must be incorporated into all programs.
- The vegetation resource is treated as a subset of livestock grazing.
- Invasive plant decisions are not included in the RMP.
- Fluid mineral development levels are approaching Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) scenarios established for analysis purposes in the existing RMP.
- Protection standards for paleontological resources are lacking.
- Recreation uses and demands are increasing.
- New Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designations may be needed, and existing ones may be outdated.
- Visual Resource Management (VRM) classifications are outdated. There are inconsistencies between the Rock Springs Field Office and the Rawlins Field Office. The designation for the Adobe Town Wilderness Study Area (WSA) is inconsistent between the Rock Springs Field Office and the RFO.
- Federal and state requirements for water quality warrant additional attention as the RMP is implemented and updated.
- Wild and Scenic River evaluations have not been conducted in the RMPPA.
- New information on cultural resources has been prepared.

The evaluation also noted that many of the decisions of the GDRMP had already been implemented. In some cases, implementation of previous decisions resulted in the establishment of valid existing rights or other obligations that will be an important consideration in the preparation of the Rawlins RMP. For example, many of the oil and gas resources in the RMPPA have been leased. The presence of these valid existing rights will affect the management choices available to BLM for consideration in developing the

Rawlins RMP. Alternatives described in the RMPPA will address potential stipulations attached to new leases following issuance of the Approved Plan; consider the availability of lands for future oil and gas leasing; and describe mitigation measures to be considered in approving Applications for Permits to Drill (APDs).

1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE BLM PLANNING PROCESS

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLMPA) and its regulations found at 43 CFR 1600–1610 dictate BLM’s planning process. A summary of the process is provided in the above section, Reader’s Guide. BLM has developed further policy and direction for preparing an RMP in the BLM Planning Handbook, H-1601-1 (2005).

BLM documents planning decisions in two types of plans: RMPs and activity plans. This document is an RMP.

Furthermore, BLM makes land use plan decisions through the RMP. Land use plan decisions include those that determine and guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions. RMPs document two types of planning decisions: desired outcomes (goals and objectives), and allowable uses and management actions anticipated to achieve the desired outcomes:

1. Goals and objectives. RMPs identify BLM’s desired outcomes for public lands and resources by establishing goals and objectives for a specific geographic area. Goals are broad statements of desired outcomes. Objectives identify specific desired outcomes for resources in a quantifiable and measurable manner, often within a specified timeframe for achievement.
2. Allowable uses and management actions. RMPs identify uses, or allocations of uses, that are allowable, restricted, or prohibited on public lands and federal mineral estate. In addition, RMPs identify actions anticipated to achieve desired outcomes, including those actions to maintain, restore, or improve land health. Management action decisions establish administrative designations such as ACECs, and recommend or make findings of suitability for congressional designations, such as possible additions to the National Wild and Scenic River System.

1.3.1 Planning Issues

In its planning process, BLM uses, from the NEPA regulations, the concept of issues and unresolved conflicts. Planning issues are those identified through internal evaluations, such as the one BLM conducted for GDRMP in 2001; scoping; and comment and information solicited from the public or gathered internally. Planning issues may include demands for resources, as well as concerns and conflicts, associated with balancing a mix of multiple uses or unresolved conflicts associated with past, present, and future management of public lands or resources. NEPA regulations require BLM to review the issues and determine which issues are significant and will narrow the discussion of issues in the EIS prepared for the RMP.

The BLM has identified the following as key issues to be analyzed in depth.

Issue 1: Development of Energy Resources and Minerals-Related Issues

Special attention is needed to address energy resource development (i.e., oil and gas, coal, solar, and wind energy) and related transportation network conflicts with other land and resource uses and values. Principal considerations include disruptive activities and human presence in big game habitat (i.e., elk,

deer, antelope, moose, and bighorn sheep), big game crucial habitat (crucial winter range and birthing areas), and other important wildlife species habitats (i.e., greater sage-grouse, plovers, raptors, and fish). Principal considerations also include the effects of disruptive activities on cultural resources, recreation values, forage uses, air quality, sensitive vegetation types, and sensitive watersheds. Areas need to be identified where surface disturbing and disruptive activities (e.g., mineral exploration and development, rights-of-way construction) are suitable or should be restricted or avoided.

Issue 2: Special Management Designations

FLPMA and the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act provide for designation of special designations and management areas or resource values. The BLM must review the actions for management areas established in the GDRMP, and determine if those actions are to be brought forward in the Rawlins RMP or, if needed, revised to meet current conditions.

The following established areas meet the criteria for protection and management of areas and resource values.

- WSAs: Encampment River Canyon, Prospect Mountain, Bennett Mountains, Adobe Town, and Ferris Mountains
- ACECs: Como Bluff, Sand Hills, Jep Canyon, and Shamrock Hills
- Wild Horse Herd Management Areas (HMA): Adobe Town, Stewart Creek, and Lost Creek.

BLM must also review the existing lands and resources and may consider and propose additional ACECs in the Rawlins RMP.

The GDRMP includes three National Natural Landmarks (NNL) identified by the National Park Service (NPS) in the 1970s (Big Hollow, Sand Creek, and Como Bluff). In developing the Rawlins RMP, the BLM must decide between the following:

- Should BLM continue management goals and objectives and management actions as described?
- Or, should BLM identify new goals and objectives and management actions for the three NNLs?

BLM may also consider whether an existing NNL meets ACEC criteria and, if so, propose establishment of a new ACEC.

Issue 3: Public Access and Transportation Systems

Resource accessibility relates to the idea that the value or usability of some resources is enhanced by improved public accessibility. To be used, resources must be accessible legally and physically. They must also be manageable (i.e., the ability to apply constraints or requirements on them). Some areas in the RMPPA, however, are isolated and difficult to access legally and physically and are difficult to manage. Land disposals and acquisitions (i.e., fee and easements) could provide improved access and manageability of public lands.

Issue 4: Wildland-Urban Interface

New demands are being placed on public lands because of growth in and around some cities, towns, rural developments, and subdivisions in the RMPPA. Growth has changed the way communities relate to surrounding public lands and has changed the communities' expectations. The basic problem is providing

for public land management along with increased demands for public land and resources. Principal considerations include providing for air and water quality, preventing the depletion of water resources, reducing accelerated erosion in critical watersheds, and preventing fragmentation of critical wildlife habitat. Considerations also include providing for development patterns and transportation and utility corridor planning, and dealing with demands for open space and recreational uses, land tenure adjustment, and wildland fire and fuels management.

Issue 5: Management of Special Status Species

Attention is needed to address management of special status species (threatened and endangered, and proposed, candidate, and sensitive plant and animal species) and the interrelationships of these species with other resource uses and activities. Principal considerations include management of species habitat to ensure continued use of the habitat by these species. Areas need to be identified where other resource activities may conflict with special status species and their habitat requirements.

Issue 6: Water Quality

Federal and state requirements for addressing water quality of water bodies located within the RMPPA will warrant additional attention as the RMP is implemented and updated. Land management decisions made by the RFO during the planning effort, regarding contributing watersheds, can impact water bodies listed on the State of Wyoming's list of threatened or impaired water bodies, watersheds used for municipal water supplies, and watersheds that contribute to sources of water used for agricultural, industrial, and other purposes.

Increased interest in the production of natural gas in the RMPPA, particularly from coal formations, requires BLM to consider methods to dispose of the water produced during oil and gas exploration and development. Legal changes to the status of depletions in the Colorado and Platte drainages must be addressed in addition to rule changes for salt loading in the Colorado River Basin.

Issue 7: Vegetation Management

Maintaining vegetation resource values, while allowing and managing consumptive uses, is a primary conflict for which BLM must determine a balance and mix of those values and uses. Resource values include watershed and riparian area protection, soil stabilization, maintenance and enhancement of wildlife habitat (particularly big game crucial winter range and habitat for candidate, sensitive, proposed, or threatened and endangered wildlife and vegetation species). Vegetative consumptive uses include livestock, wildlife, and wild horse grazing; forest management; off-road vehicle use; vegetation removal by mineral development; rights-of-way construction; and other surface disturbing activities.

Issue 8: Recreation and Cultural Resources

Recreation Use and Management

These issues are problems, opportunities, or conflicts with resource use and management that may be resolved through the planning process. Issues on recreation management are expressed in the form of questions that the RMP will address. Planning decisions are the answers or solutions to the questions posed below:

- What management actions, if any, should be employed to protect existing recreational settings on public lands?

- Should the visual character of natural landscapes surrounding historic and scenic trails be protected?
- Should off-highway vehicle (OHV) access to the public lands be limited to protect recreational settings and wildlife habitat?
- Is large-scale industrial development of public lands adversely affecting recreational settings, and displacing recreational activities, experiences, and benefits?
- Are there high-value recreation areas in the RRMPA that merit intensive management similar to that for three established Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA)? And if so, where? The SRMAs that focus on intensive recreation management are: Continental Divide National Scenic Trail; North Platte River; and Shirley Mountain Caves.
- Are the needs of the off-road vehicle enthusiasts being met with present OHV designations, or are additional “open” or unlimited OHV areas needed?
- Are dispersed recreation activities, such as hunting, being adversely affected by competing resources management decisions and subsequent resource development?

Cultural Resources Management

Development along historic transportation routes such as the Overland Trail, the Cherokee Trail, and Westward Expansion-era roads would prove detrimental to the viewshed of these historic resources. In addition, development as well as recreational uses could affect Native American sacred sites. This would be an issue to address.

1.3.2 Planning Criteria

Planning criteria define the scope of the planning effort based on applicable laws, BLM policy, and Director and State Director guidance. The criteria are used to guide the development of the proposed plan and ensure that the planning effort is focused on the issues, and that decisions are made within the context of regulations and policies. The planning criteria may be used to evaluate the responsiveness and effectiveness of the alternatives considered in the FEIS, including the proposed plan.

The planning criteria are also used to guide the selection of the proposed plan and its elements. The criteria are provided below. The reader may use them in evaluating the responsiveness and effectiveness of the proposed planning decisions goals and objectives, as well as the allowable uses, management actions, and proposed overall plan.

Planning criteria used in this RMP revision are—

- The revised RMP will recognize valid existing rights.
- Planning decisions will cover BLM-administered public lands, including split-estate lands where the subsurface minerals are severed from the surface right, and the BLM has legal jurisdiction over one or the other.
- The RMP planning effort will be collaborative and multi-jurisdictional in nature. The BLM strives to ensure that its management decisions are complementary to its planning jurisdictions and adjoining properties, within the boundaries described by law and regulation.

- The environmental analysis will consider a reasonable range of alternatives that focus on the relative values or resources and that respond to the issues. Management prescriptions will reflect the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.
- The BLM will consider current scientific information, research, new technologies, and the results of resource assessments, monitoring, and coordination to determine appropriate local and regional management strategies that will enhance or restore impaired ecosystems.
- The Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands will apply to all activities and uses (USDI BLM 1997).
- The RMP will address socioeconomics and environmental justice.
- The BLM will provide for public safety and welfare relative to fire, hazardous materials, and abandoned mine lands (AML).
- Visual resource management class designations will be analyzed and modified to reflect present conditions and future needs.
- The BLM will consider current and potential future uses of the public lands, through the development of reasonably foreseeable future development and activity scenarios based on historical, existing, and projected levels of use.
- Planning decisions will include the preservation, conservation, and enhancement of cultural, historical, paleontological, and natural components of public land resources, while considering energy development and other surface disturbing activities.
- The BLM will coordinate with tribes to identify sites, areas, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritages.
- Planning decisions will comply with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and BLM interagency agreements with the USFWS.
- Areas potentially suitable for ACEC or other special designations will be identified and, where appropriate, brought forward for analysis in the EIS.
- Waterway segments are classified, and determinations of eligibility and suitability will be made in accordance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Appropriate management prescriptions for maintaining or enhancing the outstandingly remarkable values and classifications of waterway segments meeting suitability criteria will be part of the RMP process.
- OHV use management decisions in the revised RMP will be consistent with BLM's National OHV Strategy (USDI, BLM 2001) and with any interagency agreements in effect.
- Decisions in the revised RMP will comply as appropriate with all applicable laws, regulations, policy, and guidance.
- The coal screening/planning process has been conducted on areas containing federal coal within Carbon Basin consistent with regulations found at 43 CFR Subparts 3420 and 3460. Only the first two steps of the coal screening/planning process have been conducted on areas containing federal coal outside of Carbon Basin. Unless public submissions of coal resource information or surface resource issues indicate a need to update these determinations, no additional coal screening determinations or coal planning decisions are anticipated for the Rawlins RMP until such time as a lease-by-application is received.

- BLM and the State of Wyoming entered into a consent decree on August 28, 2003, in United States District Court in Civil Action No. 03-CV-169-D. This consent decree directs that Wyoming BLM will use its best efforts to achieve and maintain previously established AMLs in all HMAs in Wyoming. Planning decisions on wild horse management will be consistent with the consent decree as long as it is in effect.

1.4 RELEVANT STATUTES, LIMITATIONS, AND GUIDELINES

Numerous federal and state laws and applicable regulations, policies, and actions could affect the alternatives analyzed in this EIS. The FLPMA is the primary authority for BLM's management of public lands. This law provides the overarching policy by which public lands are managed. It establishes provisions for land use planning, land acquisition, land withdrawals, administration, range management, rights-of-way, designated management areas, and the repeal of certain laws and statutes. The FLPMA also requires BLM to provide food and habitat management for fish, wildlife, and domestic species. In addition, BLM is integrating the results into all RMPs of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA) Reauthorization of 2000, Public Law (PL 106-469), and the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

NEPA provides for public input on issue identification and consideration of the environmental impacts of major federal actions that impact the quality of the human environment. Additional laws, regulations, and policies guiding management of public lands are identified in Appendix 39.

1.5 OTHER RELATED PLANS

BLM planning policies require that the BLM review approved or adopted resources plans of other federal, state, local, and tribal governments and, where practicable, be consistent with those plans. Table 1-3 identifies plans related to the management of land and resources that apply to this RMP revision.

**Table 1-3. Plans Related to the Management of Lands and Resources
that Apply to the Rawlins RMP Revision**

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest, Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (USFS 2003)	Albany County Land Use Plan (1997)
Green River Resource Management Plan (USDI BLM 1997)	Carbon County Land Use Plan (1998)
Lander Resource Management Plan (USDI BLM 1987)	Land and Natural Resource Management Plan for the Little Snake River Conservation District (2004)
Platte River Resource Management Plan (USDI BLM 1985)	Sweetwater County Conservation District, Land and Resource Use Plan (2005)
Little Snake Resource Management Plan (USDI BLM 1989)	Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District, Long Range and Natural Resource Management Plan (2007)
Sweetwater County Land Use Plan (2002)	

1.5.1 Other Plans

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-58), Section 368, refers to the designation of West-wide energy corridors. The Act is being implemented through current development of an interagency programmatic EIS. The final programmatic EIS will provide plan amendment decisions that will address numerous energy corridor-related issues, including the use of existing corridors (enhancements and

upgrades), identification of new corridors, supply and demand considerations, and compatibility with other corridor and project planning efforts. It is likely that identification of corridors in the programmatic EIS will affect the RMPPA and that the approved programmatic EIS would subsequently amend the Rawlins RMP.

In addition, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-58), Section 369 (oil shale and tar sands commercial leasing) is being implemented through the development of a BLM programmatic EIS. The identification of areas that are suitable for oil shale development will be included in the Oil and Tar Sands Leasing programmatic EIS. On its completion and ROD, the approved programmatic EIS would subsequently amend the Rawlins RMP. (Additional information regarding oil shale and tar sands is in Chapter 3.)

1.6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BLM AND COOPERATING AGENCIES

The NEPA regulations provide for a lead federal agency to invite other federal, state or local governments to participate in the preparation of an environmental document such as an EIS. Upon request of the lead agency, any other federal agency that has jurisdiction by law will be a cooperating agency (also called a cooperator). In addition, any other federal agency that has special expertise with respect to any environmental issue that should be addressed in the EIS may be a cooperating agency upon request of the lead agency. An agency may also request the lead agency to designate it a cooperating agency.

The concept of cooperators has been extended from federal agencies to include state and local government agencies in recent years. This inclusion of state and local government agencies as cooperating agencies is consistent with BLM's planning approach and policies. Any designated federal, state, or local government agency that becomes a cooperator is required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as to its specific roles and responsibilities.

The primary role of the cooperating agencies is to provide input during the EIS process on issues for which they have special expertise or jurisdiction. They also serve as reviewers of draft information and give overall advice on the EIS process. Cooperators meet with the lead agency periodically throughout the EIS process to discuss EIS issues as a group. Cooperating agencies are expected to participate in the EIS process at the earliest possible time, including participation in the scoping process. Staffs from cooperating agencies are available to enhance the interdisciplinary capability of the lead agency by providing needed information throughout the NEPA process.

The following agencies with jurisdiction, special expertise, or interest in the Rawlins RMP development process have agreed to participate in the EIS process as cooperating agencies:

- Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District
- Medicine Bow Conservation District
- Little Snake River Conservation District
- Sweetwater County Conservation District
- U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- State of Wyoming and its agencies
- Carbon County
- Sweetwater County
- Albany County.

1.7 SCOPING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

1.7.1 Scoping

NEPA regulations require that the BLM determine the scope of issues to address when assessing a proposed action. The intent of the scoping process is to provide opportunities for the public, tribes, other government agencies, and interest groups to “scope” the planning process and identify planning issues and concerns. During scoping, the BLM solicits new information relevant to the RMPPA that might be used to develop RMPs. Public involvement is an integral part of scoping.

1.7.2 Public Involvement

Consistent with NEPA Sections 101 and 102, and with federal regulations, BLM is required to ensure that the public is involved in the EIS process. BLM planning regulations also require the BLM to provide opportunities for the public to participate in the RMP development process.

1.7.3 Public Involvement Opportunities and Activities

The BLM published a NOI in the *Federal Register* on February 25, 2002 announcing its intent to revise the GDRMP and prepare an EIS. The NOI explained that the GDRMP would be renamed the Rawlins RMP, to be consistent with the current organizational structure and the BLM naming scheme for land use plans. Table 1-4 outlines the public involvement, coordination, and consultation events.

A 60-day scoping period began on February 3, 2003. It made scoping information, including a scoping notice and the Management Situation Analysis (MSA), as required by the BLM planning regulations, available to the public. In January 2003, scoping notices were mailed to approximately 6,000 federal, state, and local agencies, interest groups, and members of the general public.

The BLM hosted four scoping meetings in Rock Springs, Rawlins, Baggs, and Laramie, Wyoming from March 3–6, 2003. The scoping notice served as a reminder to the public of the availability of the MSA, project schedule, and other information on the planning process and effort. These meetings were conducted in an open-house format. They were staffed with BLM personnel, including the Field Manager, who were on hand to answer questions and provide information to meeting participants.

A DEIS was prepared and released to the public by NOA. It was published in the *Federal Register* on December 17, 2004. It initiated a 90-day public review and comment period. The DEIS described four possible plan alternatives for the RMP. It also included an analysis of potential environmental consequences of implementing each of the possible plan alternatives.

Table 1-4. Public Involvement, Coordination, and Consultation Events

Date	Location	Type
March 3, 2003	Rock Springs, Wyoming	Joint Public Scoping Meeting for Rawlins RMP/Pinedale RMP
March 4, 2003	Rawlins, Wyoming	Public Scoping Meeting
March 5, 2003	Baggs, Wyoming	Public Scoping Meeting
March 6, 2003	Laramie, Wyoming	Public Scoping Meeting

Date	Location	Type
December 17, 2004		NOA—Start of 90-day public comment period on the Rawlins RMP/DEIS
February 7, 2005	Rock Springs, Wyoming	Public Hearing Meeting—RMP/DEIS
February 8, 2005	Baggs, Wyoming	Public Hearing Meeting—RMP/DEIS
February 9, 2005	Rawlins, Wyoming	Public Hearing Meeting—RMP/DEIS
February 10, 2005	Laramie, Wyoming	Public Hearing Meeting—RMP/DEIS
June 5, 2007		NOA—Correction, Availability of Summary of Potential ACECs